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STAT

Sandinistas seize as spy brother of congressman

FROM COMBINED DISPATCHES

MANAGUA, Nicaragua — The brother of a U.S. congressman was arrested at a Sandinista air base and confessed he worked for a group specializing in military espionage, the Nicaraguan government announced yesterday.

Foreign Minister Miguel D'Escoto said the American prisoner, identified as Sam Hall, would be subjected to an investigation in the same manner as Eugene Hasenfus, who last month was sentenced to 30 years in prison after he was shot down on a supply run to the anti-Marxist resistance.

Mr. Hall, 49, is the brother of Rep. Tony P. Hall, Ohio Democrat, and is

himself a former Ohio state legislator and Olympic diving medalist.

Nicaraguan government officials said he was arrested Friday at Punta Huete air force base, about 13 miles northeast of Managua, with maps and sketches of military targets stuffed in his shoes.

"He said he was working for an organization that ... specialized in intelligence and espionage on military objectives ... and that he was working for U.S. government interests," said Angela Saballos, a foreign ministry spokeswoman.

State Department spokesman Bruce Ammerman said in Washington he had no confirmation of Mr. Hall's arrest.

In a statement issued in Washington, Rep. Hall said: "I am surprised and concerned over press reports about my brother, Sam. I have received no confirmation from the State Department.

"I do not share the same views on U.S. policy in Central America as my brother does, but I love him and pray for his safety."

Mr. D'Escoto told the official *Barricada* newspaper Mr. Hall came to Managua on a commercial flight

from Honduras Wednesday and went by taxi to Punta Huete.

The base, on a peninsula jutting into Lake Managua, accommodates "all types of military aircraft," the Defense Ministry said. Reagan administration officials have said the base was built for Soviet-made MiG jet fighter planes.

After his arrest, Mr. Hall first identified himself as a writer, but then said he was an adviser to Miskito Indians fighting to oust the Sandinista government. Mr. D'Escoto said.

The Interior Ministry quoted Mr. Hall as saying he worked for a group called the Phoenix Battalion, described as a private intelligence-gathering organization.

Mr. D'Escoto said in a report carried by Mutual Broadcasting System, "This information that we have obtained today in this incident ... [confirms] information that we have gathered from many sources about a plan, a United States plan, to attack Nicaragua.

"The type of information that was being registered by this man about points of military interest like bridges and airstrips ... only helps to confirm the seriousness of that information," he was quoted as saying.

Mr. Hall's mother, Anna Hall of Dayton, Ohio, told *The Associated*

Press she heard news reports of her son's capture. She said a friend told her Mr. Hall was in Nicaragua and had planned to return tomorrow.

Mrs. Hall said that until about two months ago her son had been in Florida working for a Tampa-area branch of a Dayton furniture store.

In a June 1985 interview with the Associated Press, Mr. Hall described himself as a self-employed military adviser and counterterrorist who was teaching commando tactics to the Miskito Indians in Central America.

At the time he was working with a group in Flint City, Ala., called Civilian Military Assistance, which was organized to aid the Nicaraguan rebels.

Mr. Hall said in the 1985 interview that he had trained with French, British, Dutch and Israeli commandos and that he saw action as a volunteer Israeli commando in June 1982, the month Israel invaded Lebanon.

In a 1984 interview with the *Dayton Daily News and Journal Herald*, he also claimed to have seen action with anti-communist guerrillas in Angola, saying he had been wounded there the previous year.

He is the son of the late Mayor Dave Hall of Dayton, and served as a Democrat in the Ohio House of Representatives in 1964 and 1965.